



## NEWSLETTER

November 2007

DATES	SPEAKERS APPEARING AT AGM	
AGM Saturday, November 17 at the Quaker Meeting House.	Faiza El-Higzi from the Moslem community and Wayne Weaver from the Brisbane Youth Service, will be the featured speakers at the AVPQ Annual General Meeting.	The business part of the meeting will start after a shared lunch. All positions on the Management Committee fall vacant at the AGM, and anyone who is interested in nominating for any position is asked to contact the Secretary. We would encourage members to consider becoming a member of the Management Committee.
WORKSHOPS	The AGM will be held at the Quaker Meeting House, 10 Hampson Street, Kelvin Grove, on Saturday, 17 November. The meeting starts with coffee served at 9.30 am.	Meetings are usually held once a month, and the current members would be delighted to welcome new members with different ideas. The current Management Committee consists of: President Kathy Damm; Vice-President Terry Pinnell; Secretary Dorothy McCarroll; Treasurer, Rolf Damm; HIPP Representative Karen O'Donahue.
Book now for a basic community workshop November 24-25, 07		
Learn about the subtle and nuanced processes of Aboriginal Australian conflict management, at a workshop, March 9, 08.		
STUDENT EDITOR	AVPQ NEEDS MORE LEADERS	
This issue of the AVPQ newsletter was edited by TAFE Diploma of Editing and Publishing student Simon Sandall, for a work placement component of his course.	The AVPQ needs more leaders, but even if you do not wish to join the AVPQ Management Committee, you can get involved in other ways.	will be running the Peace Education course for student teachers in the first semester of next year. Kathy also looks after the printing and distribution of the workshop program.
	The core of the Management Committee consists of the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and (when we can find one) Minutes Secretary. Rolf will be resigning as Treasurer, and we have been very lucky to find a replacement like Roger Shen.	All positions will become vacant at the AGM, though some members may be willing to stay on for another year. But new blood on any committee is always welcome, as this helps to keep our ideas fresh.
	Kathy will not be standing for the position of President again. She plans to become the Assistant Workshop Coordinator to replace Heather, who	If you would like to know more about any position, please contact our Secretary, Dorothy, who will send you this information.
CONTACT US	FOURTH FRIDAYS AT AVID READER	
AVPQ PO BOX 78 Sherwood Qld 4075  Ph. 073286 2593  avpq@yahoo.com.au www.avpq.org.au  ABN: 39029916740	Just a reminder about our Fourth Friday Gatherings at the Avid Reader bookshop in the West End. This is a purely social gathering for a cuppa and a snack, and it's a good time to catch up on where we all are in our lives.	who may not have done a workshop but would be interested in meeting members of AVPQ, they would be very welcome.
	If anybody would like to bring a friend,	Dorothy does send out reminders about this each month. Please feel free to contact her if you would like more information.
FINDING PEACEFUL PATHWAYS		

## NO GRUDGES: 1820s ABORIGINAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN MORETON BAY

Aboriginal Australian conflict was settled with a minimum of physical harm. So-called tribal wars would cease as soon as someone was injured. And survival was hard enough without grudges.

John Uniacke observed an example of conflict resolution in 1823 near Moreton Bay. In 1823, Governor Brisbane in Port Jackson (Sydney) sent John Oxley to scout for locations for new penal settlements at Port Curtis, Port Bowen, and Moreton Bay.

John Uniacke sailed with John Oxley and kept a diary.

On one occasion Uniacke observed a large gathering of Aborigines near Moreton Bay- there for the settling of a dispute between two men.

"Three months before the one who belonged to the Pumicestone tribe had been wounded in the knee with a spear," John Uniacke wrote in his diary.

"Having recovered from this wound, he had come to demand satisfaction."

Around 500 people stood around a circle about 25 feet in diameter and three feet deep, surrounded by a palisade of sticks. Several of the spectators had up to six spears.

Then the two combatants entered the arena, lay down their spears in opposite rows point to point, then began to move around, speaking loudly and gesticulating at each other.

Eyes locked on each other, they each picked up three spears which they drove into the ground for immediate use.

Then they each picked up a spear, and the assembly uttered a tremendous shout then fell silent.

"Then one or two of the men's friends from both parties who were outside the ring spoke for a few minutes and as soon as they had finished, the native

of Pumicestone River threw his spear with all the force his arm was capable of towards his opponent who succeeded in warding it off with some kind of shield made of wood called an *elemong*, which nevertheless it penetrated three or four inches.

"The other man in turn threw a lance which was warded off in the same manner. At last the third spear thrown by the native of Pumicestone River penetrated the shoulder of his opponent who fell instantly.

"Thereupon, two of his friends jumped into the ring and pulling out the spear, they gave it back to its owner and the whole ceremony ended with three shouts.

"All the natives retired to the huts which had been quickly erected for the occasion, and the next day they gathered again around the arena to give the friends of the wounded man an opportunity to avenge him. But no one wanted to do so since the combatants had wounded each other.

"A formal reconciliation then took place between the two tribes, which was announced by shouting, dancing etc.

"Three boys were chosen from each party and sent into the ring to wrestle in a friendly manner. After this, the two tribes joined in a hunting expedition which lasted a week..."

-from *Discovery of the Brisbane River*, Translated by M.S. Riviere, from a French translation of the journal of John Fitzgerald Uniacke (1798-1824). Royal Historical Society of Queensland, Brisbane, 1996.

## TRAINING SERVED WITH DINNER

A new format used at an AVPQ Facilitator's Training Day in August, is likely to be repeated.

This year the Management Committee decided to hold a Facilitator Training Day (really a training afternoon) before the dinner, and the idea worked very well. They decided to try a different way of organising the time. Instead of one or two facilitators presenting a pre-planned session, the committee spent the time looking at events that had arisen during or after

workshops - events facilitators thought were worth bringing to the group.

The Management Committee agreed that this was a format worth repeating. We would like to thank Monique for hosting the session. The dinner for members was held on Saturday 11 August at the Sitar Indian Restaurant in the West End. Thirteen members and their partners attended and had a fun evening.

The Management Committee likes to offer a dinner to facilitators and all members to thank them, particularly the facilitators, for their support during the year.

The facilitators give freely of their time and expertise to run the workshops and this is greatly appreciated. Without them, there would be no AVPQ.



## ABORIGINAL CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

Aboriginal conflict management processes are subtle and nuanced. AVPQ, along with ANTAR and WILPF, is offering the opportunity to hear about the ways Indigenous people deal with conflict, at a workshop early next year. We are offering this workshop, at the cost of a donation, to be held at the Quaker Meeting House, 10 Hampson Street, Kelvin Grove, on Sunday afternoon, March 9th, 2008. To reserve a place contact [heatheravpq11@optusnet.com.au](mailto:heatheravpq11@optusnet.com.au). Only 20 places are available, so please make your reservation quickly.

Aboriginal Australians have thought about fundamental human questions over thousands of years: how to live together without killing each other off; how to live with the environment;

why we live; and how to find answers that do not make people feel alienated, lonely or murderous. Aboriginal Australia does not so much use prescribed conflict resolution processes as a subtle, nuanced managing of human relations. Aboriginal conflict management practices and political systems vary significantly across the Australian continent and have shifted and changed over time with the impacts of colonisation. In many cases both practices and systems have been damaged and limited. But Aboriginal people across the continent, rural and urban, strive to manage conflicts skilfully- in ways that restore balance by drawing upon their traditions. Some practices endure, others are

recuperated. There are big differences across space and time, but enough similarities exist across the continent for us to draw out important themes for consideration beyond the specialised domains of Australian ethnography and Aboriginal studies. This is particularly so with regard to the organising philosophical principles – Dreaming and Law – and the accompanying notions of relatedness, balance, autonomy, self-regulation and becoming human. These principles form the foundation that informs security and conflict management practices. This workshop is offered through QRM in recognition of 2007 being both the 40th anniversary of the 1967 Referendum and the 10th anniversary of the Bringing Them Home report.

**THE PRESENTERS** – Mary Graham and Lilla Watson are both well known for their involvement in the Aboriginal community, and for their ability to educate Whitefellas about the Aboriginal culture.

**Mary Graham** was born in Brisbane and grew up on the Gold Coast. She is a Kombu-merri person and is affiliated with the Waka Waka group through her mother. Mary has lectured at various tertiary institutions, and has researched for the Foundation for Aboriginal and Islander Research Action (FAIRA), served on many boards and committees of

Aboriginal organisations and the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, and represented South East Queensland on an ATSIC Regional Council. Other activities have included editing for UQP, publishing training manuals for all levels of government, and script development work for film and tv.

**Lilla Watson** is a Gangulu woman who grew up in what is now Central Queensland. She has served on the Boards of both the Aboriginal and Islander Child Care Agency and the Murri School, and worked at the Brisbane

Indigenous Media Association. Lilla has lectured in Aboriginal Welfare Studies at the University of Queensland, and developed and taught two subjects: Aboriginal Perspectives on University Education, and Aboriginal Approaches to Knowledge. In her art work she has portrayed and projected aspects of her spiritual and cultural identity, and has exhibited here and overseas. Lilla has also served on a number of government selection panels and committees; on the Senate of the University of Queensland; and she is on the Board of the State Library of Queensland.

# NO NEED FOR VIOLENCE:

Brian Martin is professor of social sciences at the University of Wollongong. In this interview for AVPQ, he says non-violent action is an increasingly popular means of attaining goals.

**AVPQ NEWS:** What's your conception of nonviolent action?

**PROFESSOR BRIAN MARTIN:**

Nonviolent action is a broad category of action, including any nonroutine form of social or political action as long as it's not physically violent. It includes everything from leaflets and rallies to strikes, boycotts, vigils, sit-ins and alternative political institutions. If a method is routine, like public petitions in Australia, it wouldn't fit this definition — but a petition in China certainly would, or indeed an Australian workplace petition challenging the boss.

**AVPQ:** When was nonviolent action first used?

**BM:** No one knows! Certainly, it has been used for centuries, sometimes in major campaigns as in Hungary against the Austrian rulers in the mid 1800s and in Finland against Russian rulers 1898-1905. Gandhi, with his campaigns in South Africa and India in the first half of the 1900s, was the pioneer of strategic nonviolent action, understanding how nonviolent action works as part of a strategy for challenging oppression and repression. Since then, the strategic dimension — which means conscious planning to achieve goals in the face of obstacles — has become ever more important in nonviolent action.

**AVPQ:** Is nonviolent action a growing phenomenon in the world, would you say, and why or why not?

**BM:** Today, training in methods of nonviolent action takes place

around the world and there are nonviolent campaigns big and small for all sorts of issues. At the large scale there are regime changes in countries like the Philippines, South Africa, East Germany and Serbia. At smaller scales there are untold local campaigns on environmental, workplace and women's issues, among others. Nonviolent action is definitely a growing phenomenon.

**AVPQ:** How did you become interested in nonviolence?

**BM:** In the early 1970s, I developed a belief in the value of people running their own lives, rather than being dominated by governments and corporations. But think of this: if there's no government, what can be done about defending a society against attack, in particular military attack? In the late 1970s I read about nonviolent action and immediately



thought, "Here's the solution." With nonviolent action, people take charge of their own lives rather than rely on someone else to defend their interests.

**AVPQ:** What's your personal philosophy with regard to nonviolence and how it works?

**BM:** I'm a pragmatist. I want to explore how nonviolence can be used. But I can understand why people use violence, whether individually or in collective action such as in armies. Rather than condemn it, I'd rather say, "Let's see

whether there are nonviolent options to achieve the same goals."

**AVPQ:** How did you get involved in Schweik Action Wollongong, and what activities have you been involved in with the group?

**BM:** Let me go back a bit. In 1976, I joined Friends of the Earth Canberra and became involved in activism, mainly against uranium mining. One of the key issues was — and still is — proliferation of nuclear weapons via the nuclear fuel cycle. At that time there was no peace group in Canberra; FOE organised Hiroshima Day events. I gradually became interested in peace issues and helped set up Canberra Peacemakers in 1979. One of our members, Laurie Shane, was experienced with nonviolent action training, so we put a lot of effort into that and into social defence, which is nonviolent community resistance as an alternative to military defence.

In 1986, I moved to Wollongong. I met a couple of people and we set up a group to promote social defence. We eventually adopted the name Schweik Action Wollongong. The Good Soldier Schweik was a fictional character, in the novel of that name by Jaroslav Hasek, who as a soldier in the Austrian army in World War I pretended to be extremely stupid, thereby causing all sorts of difficulties for his superiors. The name "Schweik Action" is a whimsical combination of two concepts, the disruption associated with Schweik and goal direction associated with Action.

Over the years we've settled into a pattern of doing community research projects. We pick a topic that interests us, interview people about it and then produce a leaflet or article. For example, several years ago we interviewed Muslims in Wollongong, asking them about



# PEACEFUL METHODS WORK

what skills, contacts and knowledge would help them resist attacks and prejudice. The impact of our projects is as much in the doing as the output. Local Muslims welcomed the opportunity to share their concerns and ideas with people who cared.

**AVPQ:** Can you tell more about social defence?

**BM:** Currently, social defence is just an idea and very far from a practical reality, so it's not possible to give definitive answers. Even the idea of using protests, strikes, boycotts, sit-ins, fraternisation, alternative institutions and other nonviolent methods as an alternative to military defence is completely off the agenda. It is unknown to most people. When it's explained, it can be met with incredulity. Most people believe that the only way to counter violence is by superior violence. There are numerous historical examples in which nonviolent action has been used to overthrow repressive regimes, such as in Eastern Europe in 1989, and several examples in which nonviolent action has stopped coups (Germany, 1920; Algeria/France, 1961; Soviet Union, 1991). However, there are only two major examples of nonviolent resistance against military invasions: Germany, 1923, and Czechoslovakia, 1968.

**AVPQ:** Why do you think social defence is so little known?

**BM:** It's not just social defence. Nonviolent action generally is little known and poorly understood. It is almost invisible in the news. How many people know about the numerous nonviolent protests by Israelis and Palestinians, when all that's in the news is stories of Palestinian suicide bombers and Israeli military actions? Thousands of Hollywood movies feature violence compared to a mere handful that highlight nonviolence. History textbooks tell of armies, battles and

empires, with less attention to people's struggles.

**AVPQ:** Governments seem very big on suppression of dissent these days, while projecting an image of transparency and accountability. What peaceful methods are open to people when everything seems sewn up this way by media- and PR-savvy governments?

**BM:** There are lots of ways to promote dissent. The challenge is to be effective. One way is to exercise dissent — by setting up a website, distributing leaflets, holding vigils, promoting boycotts — and being ready to publicise suppression, using publicity to generate greater support.

Humour can be quite effective. The Chaser's stunt at the APEC meeting in Sydney in September — in which the ABC comedy unit surprisingly got through police lines by posing as a Canadian delegation — exposed the government's overblown security measures.

I recently wrote an article, "Energising dissent," that looks at tactics against suppression in Australia.

**AVPQ:** Can you recommend a few books on nonviolent action?

**BM:** The classic book is Gene Sharp's *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*. Gene has a new book, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle*, which summarises the same points and includes recent case studies. Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall's book *A Force More Powerful* is a good introduction. You can also obtain videos of the television series that the book accompanied. There's also a video game titled *A Force More Powerful*, for developing skills in strategic nonviolence thinking.

Actually, there are dozens of good books, and different ones will suit different people. Unfortunately, only a few of these are on the web, which is where a lot of people go to find

material. It's worth looking at the online bibliography "People Power and Protest since 1945: a bibliography on nonviolent action," at <http://www.civilresistance.info/bibliography>.

**AVPQ:** What issues are of major concern to you, and how do you apply anti-violence and pacifist action to them?

**BM:** My main interest in recent years is on tactics against injustice. I've developed a framework called the backfire model. When powerful groups do something that can be perceived as unjust, they typically use one or more methods to reduce popular outrage: cover up the action, devalue the target, reinterpret what happened, use official channels to give an appearance of justice, and use intimidation and bribery. I was inspired to develop this framework by considering what Gene Sharp calls "political jiu-jitsu", when violent attacks on peaceful protesters recoil against the attackers. I analysed the tactics by perpetrators to inhibit this sort of reaction. If you know what perpetrators are likely to do, you can formulate better strategies. The same process can happen in other areas, well outside the violence-versus-nonviolence scenario, whenever people perceive something as unfair, such as censorship, job dismissals, sexual harassment, bullying at work, environmental disasters, invasions and terrorism. Personally, my concern is to get a handle on effective tactics and to encourage others to think strategically. Having principles is certainly important, but we need to be as effective as possible in promoting them.

To access Brian Martin's website, put his name into Google.



## AVP Queensland workshops successful in Borallon 2007

Relaxed Ron leads AVP workshops in Borallon Correctional Centre. It is powerful facilitation work, but it is not for everyone. Here he reports on the history and current state of play of AVP workshops in Borallon.

In the early 90s, when AVPQ was able to run workshops in several Queensland prisons, Borallon was something of an experiment.

Borallon Correctional Centre was the sole privately run prison where AVPQ offered workshops. We found that there were measurable differences in the environment in this jail from the environment in the other, state-run, prisons.

The old "us and them" culture had not set in among the Borallon custodial staff who, for the most part, had been recruited from outside the old prisons department.

So, many appeared to approach their job with a fresh and positive outlook. We enjoyed our workshops in Borallon and it was only later when one of our facilitators acted inappropriately that we were unable to continue to offer workshops in this prison.

However, we are now back and have

endeavoured to rebuild the original trust and respect we enjoyed in our earlier years, mainly thanks to Kathy and our contact in Borallon, Alberta Western, who has given us unstinting support and assistance in organising and setting up our workshops.

We were just approaching the last cycle of workshops for the year in mid-October, when we ran the Train the Facilitator workshop.

From very small numbers early in the year - sometimes only six in a Basic Level workshop - we built up to full workshops and are now limiting our numbers to 16 per workshop.

This is also due to the small room in which we are working.

In the last workshop we had to pin a sheet of paper to the door so people could write their names down for future workshops.

Prisoners were coming to our room to ask if they could join in.

All this is due to word of mouth from people who have completed our workshops and told other prisoners that this is a different experience, that real stuff is happening and that they can see a way forward - an alternative to the dead-end path of violence.

We are fortunate now to have two very good Inmate Facilitators who are excellent role models for their fellow prisoners inside, and are well respected in the jail.

There are others standing in line who want to facilitate and after this next workshop there will be more. An embarrassment of riches.

As well as the two Inmate Facilitators we have a good team of four facilitators from the outside who are gaining the kind of experience only prison workshops can offer.

I am really grateful to have facilitators of the calibre of Jim, Lesley and Sharon who volunteer

to come into Borallon on a regular basis.

It is really important to have people on whom we can totally rely when in the prison environment.

We can support and assist facilitators who are new to the prison environment but we need to exercise care in selecting them in the first place.

We cannot afford any more incidents of inappropriate behaviour which could ban us from entering Borallon or any other jail in Queensland.

Borallon is the only prison in which we operate, due mainly to the shortage of Lead Facilitators and people who are willing to give up the three days plus required.

If we trained more facilitators and expanded our small team of leaders we could then offer workshops to other prisons.

Until that time we need to nurture Borallon and the reputation we have built there.

- Relaxed Ron.

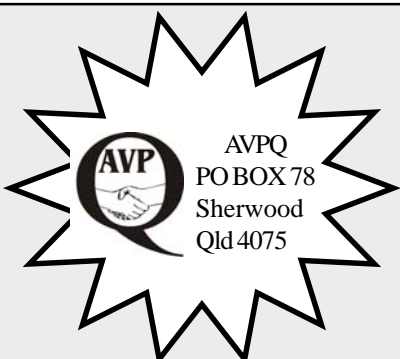
### AVPQ GETS PCYC VENUE

AVPQ has been very fortunate in securing a regular venue for our community workshops, the Fortitude Valley Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC) rooms on the corner of Church and Wickham Streets in the Valley.

We would like to acknowledge the generosity and support of Sgt. Robert Duffner and his team at the PCYC.

### CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations Terry on walking your daughter Charlotte down the aisle recently. Best wishes for the happy couple from AVPQ.



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**We're on the web**  
**www.avpq.org.au**